

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 09592 061056Z

21

ACTION EA-09

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: CHURCH FREEDOM OF MISSION CONFERENCE PROTESTS ROKG
RESTRICTIONS

REF: (A) SEOUL 9219, (B) SEOUL 9443

1. KNCC SPONSORED NATIONWIDE CONFERENCE ON FREEDOM OF MISSION FROM NOVEMBER 29 TO 30 PRODUCED BOLDEST CRITICISM OF ROKG POLICIES OF ANY OF KNCC SERIES OF MEETINGS HELD IN NOVEMBER (SEE REF A). A U.S. CITIZEN WHO HAD ATTENDED KNCC INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND NATIONAL SECURITY (SEE REF B) HAD MENTIONED TO EMBASSY HIS IMPRESSION THAT SENSE OF SUPPORT KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS HAD RECEIVED AT INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION SEEMED TO HAVE ENCOURAGED THEM AS THEY PREPARED FOR FREEDOM OF MISSION CONFERENCE. THIS IMPRESSION EVIDENTLY CORRECT.

2. CONFERENCE ADDRESSED THREE ISSUES IN FOLLOWING TERMS:

A) CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS--CHURCH FACED WITH GRAVE CHALLENGE FROM WITHIN BY THOSE WHO DO NOT RECOGNIZE SOCIAL MISSION AND FROM WITHOUT BY THOSE IN POWER WHO STUBBORNLY INSIST ON CONFORMITY WITH THEIR VIEWS. CHURCH PROTESTED MISCONCEPTION THAT CHURCH ONLY A PLACE WHERE ONE PRAYS FOR PERSONAL SALVATION. CHURCH DUTY-BOUND TO PRESS FOR JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND REPENTANCE. YET
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 09592 061056Z

THESE KEY ACTIVITIES REGARDED AS ANTI-GOVERNMENT OR ANTI-

STATE WITH CONSEQUENT RESTRICTION ON CHURCH FREEDOM. B) CHRISTIANITY AND COMMUNISM--CHRISTIANITY AND COMMUNISM INCOMPATIBLE, BUT UNFORTUNATELY SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARBITRARILY DECLEAR CHURCHES AND CHURCH SPONSORED SOCIAL PROGRAMS COMMUNIST BOTH THROUGH ANONYMOUS PUBLICATIONS AND OFFICIAL SPEECHES. C) PSEUDO RELIGIONS (READ UNIFICATION CHURCH)--PSEUDO RELIGIONS ARE SIGN OF UNSTABLE TIMES. THEY ARE THREAT TO CHURCH AND FUTURE OF NATION BECAUSE THEY ARE TACITLY SUPPORTED AND PROTECTED BY "CERTAIN PEOPLE" TO CREATE MORAL, RELIGIOUS AND ECONOMIC CONFUSION BOTH IN KOREA AND ABROAD.

3. AMONG RECOMMENDATIONS CONFERENCE MADE FOR ALL KNCC MEMBER CHURCHES WERE TWO DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN RANKS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STRUGGLE: A) ALL CHURCHES WERE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE; AND B) ALL CHURCHES WERE URGED TO SUPPORT EXISTING SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAMS IN INDUSTRIAL AND SLUM AREAS.

4. CONFERENCE MADE MANY RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT BUT MOST NOTABLE INCLUDED: A) DEMAND THAT ROKG TAKE ACTION AGAINST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO MALIGN CHURCH AS PRO-COMMUNIST. (IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT MINISTER OF UNIFICATION CONSIDERED ARCH-CULPRIT ON THIS SCORE. HIS REMOVAL IN DECEMBER 4 CABINET RESHUFFLE HAS PROMPTED KNCC SATISFACTION.) B) ROKG SHOULD RELEASE ALL PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE. C) ROKG SHOULD IMMEDIATELY CEASE SURVEILLANCE, RESTRICTIONS AND THREATS AGAINST CHURCH MEETINGS AND CLERGYMEN. D) ROKG SHOULD RESTORE FREEDOM TO UNIVERSITIES AND PERMIT DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION OF STUDENTS. E) RESTRICTIONS ON WORKERS RIGHTS TO BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY AND STRIKE SHOULD BE LIFTED. F) ROKG SHOULD GUARANTEE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION FOR ALL KOREANS.

5. KNCC SOURCES DESCRIBED CONFERENCE AS EXCITING. THEY THOUGHT ROKG DISPLEASURE POSSIBLE, BUT HAD EXPERIENCED NO HARASSMENT YET AS RESULT OF MEETING. LOCAL COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA DID NOT MENTION CONFERENCE, BUT RESULTS WILL BE MADE KNOWN WITHIN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY BY PASTORS WHO ATTENDED FROM CHURCHES THROUGHOUT NATION.

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 09592 061056Z

6. COMMENT: CONFERENCE INDICATES THAT ROKG WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SATISFY HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS WITH ONLY COSMETIC CHANGES IN POLICY.
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